

# Cleveland National Forest

## Change in Recreation Fee Structure: Mt. Laguna Recreation Fee Area

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### Background

In June 2011, the Forest Service conducted a national review of the 97 standard amenity recreation fee areas on National Forest System lands. As a result of the review, the Forest Service plans to remove the fee area designation for 73 standard amenity recreation fee areas, and reduce the size of the remaining 24 standard amenity recreation fee areas.

Within the Cleveland National Forest, the national review resulted in a proposal to eliminate the fee area designation for four standard amenity recreation fee areas (Corral Canyon, Ortega, Tenaja, and Wildomar) and substantially reduce the size of the remaining two (Holy Jim and Mt. Laguna). Based on direction regarding implementation of the national review, in June 2012, the Cleveland National Forest began issuing notices of required fees and enforcing recreation fees consistent with this proposal, while preparing to submit it to the California Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (R-RAC).

### Description of the Recreation Area

The Mt. Laguna Recreation Area includes two family campgrounds, three group campgrounds, two picnic areas, one scenic overlook, two information and interpretation sites, several trailheads, and one visitor center. The Sunrise Scenic Byway runs through the middle of the recreation area. The Mt. Laguna Recreation Area offers great camping, views of the desert and the Pacific Ocean, and numerous trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. The Pacific Crest Trail runs through the northern portion of the area.

### Mt. Laguna Recreation Fee Proposal

The Cleveland National Forest is proposing to:

- Substantially reduce the size of the Mt. Laguna standard amenity recreation fee (SAF) area to include (see enclosed map):
  - A small SAF area encompassing the Burnt Rancheria Campground and Red-Tailed Roost Day Use Area (see Table 1);
  - A small SAF area encompassing Agua Dulce Trailhead, Wooded Hill Group Campground, and Wooded Hill Trailhead (see Table 1);
  - A small SAF area encompassing Meadows Information Kiosk and Trailhead (see Table 1);
- Retain four SAF day use sites outside the SAF areas (see Table 2);
- Retain two EAF sites outside the SAF areas: El Prado and Horse Heaven Group Campgrounds (no changes to recreation fees);

- Eliminate recreation fee at Garnet Information Site, Penny Pines Interpretive Site, and Storm Canyon Vista/Trailhead; and
- Continue to accept local and national passes as the fee payment mechanism for day use at recreation fee sites and areas.

**Table 1. Mt. Laguna Standard Amenity Recreation Fee Areas (Passes Accepted)**

Site Name	Parking	Toilet	Trash Receptacle	Interpretive Sign	Picnic Tables	Security Services
<b>Red-Tail Standard Amenity Recreation Fee Area:</b>						
Red-Tail Roost Day Use Area	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Burnt Rancheria Campground <sup>1</sup>	Y	Y(S) <sup>2</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Agua Dulce Standard Amenity Recreation Fee Area:</b>						
Agua Dulce Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wooded Hill Group Campground <sup>3</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wooded Hill Trailhead	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
<b>Meadows Standard Amenity Recreation Fee Area:</b>						
Meadows Information Kiosk & Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

<sup>1</sup> Concession-operated campground; Adventure Passes and Interagency Passes accepted for day use.

<sup>2</sup> A seasonal toilet is available May through September.

<sup>3</sup> A Forest Service-operated campground with a separate expanded amenity recreation fee, Adventure Passes and Interagency Passes are accepted for day use.

**Table 2. Standard Amenity Recreation Fee Sites Outside of the Mt. Laguna SAF Area**

Site Name	Parking	Toilet	Trash Receptacle	Interpretive Sign	Picnic Tables	Security Services
Desert View Picnic Area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Laguna Interpretive/Day Use Site <sup>1</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pioneer Mail Picnic Site	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nobel Canyon Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

<sup>1</sup> The visitor center is free.

## Fee Collection and Compliance

If the proposal is adopted a large portion of the recreation area would be available to the public free of charge. No change is being proposed to the recreation fees charged within the much smaller SAF fee areas in Mt. Laguna (see Table 1) or to the recreation fees at recreation fee sites listed in Tables 2. The fee payment mechanism would continue to be recreation passes: the Adventure Pass (\$5 per day, \$30 annually, and \$5 for a second vehicle) or the America the Beautiful-the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes (Annual-\$80; Senior-\$10; and Access, Military, and Volunteer-free).

The fee payment mechanism for expanded amenity recreation fees in campgrounds would continue to be through the National Recreation Reservation Service on-site fee tubes.

The Forest Service's Adventure Pass is available at Forest Service offices, local vendors, and on-line. The use of recreation passes as a fee payment mechanism would continue to enhance efficiencies in fee collection and compliance while providing the customer convenience visitors have come to expect. The Forest Service enforces and would continue to enforce recreation fees and issues notices of required fees in the recreation sites and areas identified in Tables 1 and 2. Compliance is verified and would continue to be verified by observing recreation passes (for day use) or fee envelopes (for overnight use) displayed on vehicles parked within these recreation sites and areas.

## **Anticipated Impacts of the Change**

### **Financial**

The financial impacts of the proposed changes are unknown at this time.

### **Resources**

The impacts of the proposed changes on natural resources are unknown at this time and would be monitored.

### **Visitor Use**

Shifts in visitor use patterns may result from the proposed changes. Impacts on recreation facilities, sanitation, public health and safety, and resources are unknown and would be monitored.

## **Planned Accomplishments**

Recreation fee revenue would be used to fund operations and maintenance at the recreation sites and areas where recreation fees are collected, including:

- Toilet cleaning;
- Trash and litter removal;
- Drinking water at some day use sites;
- Graffiti removal;
- Security patrols;
- Cleaning and repair of facilities;
- Removal of hazard trees; and
- Support of the Laguna Mountain Visitor Center.

## Public Involvement

### Planned

The Forest Service is seeking public comment on the proposed changes and plans to submit the proposal to the R-RAC in the winter of 2014. In the interim, the Cleveland National Forest is issuing notices of required fees and enforcing recreation fees only within the recreation sites and areas identified in Tables 1 and 2.

The Forest will:

- Post information on proposed changes at the affected sites;
- Publish a press release regarding the proposal in the *San Diego Union Tribune*;
- Post information on the proposal on the Cleveland National Forest website;
- Brief local and federal elected officials; and
- Present the proposal to the R-RAC.

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